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FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

ON

CHURCH COMPREHENSIVENESS,

AND

THE REQUEST OF THE NINE BISHOPS,

BEING A PART OF

THE ANNUAL ADDRESS,

ON MAY 10TH, 1871,

OF

BISHOP VAIL, OF KANSAS.

James Hubbard Ho.

LAWRENCE, KANSAS:

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ON
CHURCH COMPREHENSIVENESS.

In my Annual Address of the last year I presented some Suggestions on Church Comprehensiveness, as bearing upon the discussions which are agitating our church at the present time. The views then presented were the subject of considerable attention and criticism in the church, and letters from influential men of quite divergent opinions and sympathies, in other dioceses, were received, accepting those views as the basis of a still more liberal comprehension in our Apostolic communion. Our church papers, also, took up the subject, and there was a general agreement as to the soundness of the positions maintained. From the comments of the press, and from the letters received, I find, from one side of our church, but two objections of any importance to the special application of the principles there asserted, as I made it, to the matter of Liturgical revision in its relation to our Baptismal formularies. I find a third objection, coming from the other side of our church, in reference to the danger of legalizing new liberty, in both the directions towards which large portions of our church, on its two extremes, are tending.

I wish to give a brief reply to these objections, and thus to shew that the positions advanced are held securely and unanswerably.

The ground assumed and defended is, that as the visible church is, in the scriptural representations, and in

the nature of things, one, so her entire outward system of Ritual, including Formularies, and also her Canonical Legislation, should be so arranged as to embody, and make it possible to embody, in one communion and fellowship, all the sincere disciples of Christ, who, by the one baptism, are members of the one Holy Catholic Church visible. In other words, the basis of Church Comprehensiveness should be only that which is essential to be believed and to be done, as touching faith and morals, while in regard to all things non-essential, large liberty and toleration should be permitted, both as to matters of opinion and as to matters of ceremonial order, within the unity of this grand comprehension. The nature of the church, abstractly considered with reference to its component parts, and the ends for which it is constituted, demands this. And the history of its primitive construction and outgrowth, as developed under the guidance of Apostolic inspiration, and as still perpetuated in a few of its important principles and fundamental precedents, is in accordance with the same position. An illustration of such a system, as requiring only essentials, is given in the form of the Apostles' Creed, and in the Vows of Baptism, which are the only conditions of admission to church membership, both of which substantially are historically traceable to the times of the New Testament inspiration, and thus shew us the mind of God in this matter. The question arises: If, in any particular, our present church system is not in harmony with this example, are we prepared so to modify it that it shall correspond with such a Divine model? Or, are we yet too narrow, and too little in sympathy with God's forbearance?

As a very important measure towards carrying out this principle of comprehensiveness in our church sys-

tem suggested by the exigencies of the times, nine of our bishops have recommended the authorizing of a discretionary alternative phraseology in that portion of our Office of Baptism of Infants, where the word, or certain forms of the word "regenerate" may occur.

To this recommendation there are, I have said, only two serious objections.

I. The first of the two objections referred to is, that *the effect of an alternative phrase is to interpret the other phrases, and thus to fix the sense within more exact and less open limits than before.**

An example is given in the Rubric on the Creed: "Any churches may omit the words, *he descended into hell*, or may, instead of them use the words, *he went into the place of departed spirits*, which are considered as words of the same meaning in the Creed," the last phrase interpreting and fixing the sense of the former.

I reply, that alternative phrases *may*, or *may not be*, interpretative.

The Rubric on the Creed just quoted names two alternatives, one of which is not, and the other of which is, interpretative.

1. The former is to "omit" entirely a phrase which some persons do or did not approve. In doing this there is surely no attempt at an interpretation. It is a permission not to use the phrase at all, to drop out those words and with them their sense altogether, because to many minds it is or was exceptionable. The church, retaining the words, as the rule, always utters *her* creed entire. The church, permitting an alternative, simply allows a Christian *for himself* (not for her), slightly to modify that Creed, in order to meet the necessity of his

* This objection is felt by many minds, and has been ably set forth in a notice of my "Suggestions" by the *Church News* of St. Louis and by the *American Churchman* of Milwaukee and Chicago.

individual conscience. *His omitting* does not interpret *her retaining*. Would it not be equally wise in the church to-day to act upon this precedent, and allow those, to whom the word "regenerate" in the Baptismal Office is very exceptionable, to "omit" that word if they desire to do so? And, if this can be allowed in the Creed, why not in a formulary less catholic, less dogmatic, less sacred?

2. But there is a second alternative, which is to substitute for the unacceptable phrase "*he descended into hell*," another phrase given in the Rubric, "*he went into the place of departed spirits*."

In this example is the case of an alternative phrase, which is *clearly interpretative*. Why? Because *it is declared to be so* by the concluding clause of the Rubric, "*which are considered as words of the same meaning in the Creed*." *This clause makes it interpretative*, and fixes an English sense in accordance with the definite sense of the original. If this last interpreting clause had been omitted, these two phrases might very fairly have admitted two very different, although not contradictory, senses in this part of the Creed, since the phrases in themselves are not necessarily identical in their meaning.

3. Let us now take another case of *an alternative phrase not interpretative*. There are, in the communion office, two proper Prefaces for Trinity Sunday, discretionary and alternative, but not in any sense interpretative, except in that loosest sense in which, from the harmony of all truth, whatsoever may be correctly said upon any doctrine tends to throw light upon whatsoever else may be correctly said upon the same. But these two alternatives are not designed to interpret each other. They are *different*, although not contradictory, *aspects*

of a great and many-sided truth. One presents the philosophical and formal statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, the other presents the simply scriptural, and in the best sense experimental statement of the same doctrine. One presents it, as in the discussions of the old ages it was finally, after many centuries, evolved in its dogmatic perfection; the other presents it, as it has been received from the beginning, in the simple worship and personal faith of believers. One states it as the abstract and true; the other states it as the practical and equally true. Thus many minds, with varying modes of thought, and of peculiar individual experiences, are helped, while at the same time *more sides* of the same truth, more aspects of the many-sided truth, are exhibited and set forth by the church.

4. Still another case of the same sort is found in the two forms used in the Ordering of Priests. These are discretionary and alternative, yet no one can for a moment speak of them as interpretative in any strict sense. The diversity of the two forms is universally acknowledged, and there have been serious controversies between their several advocates. While both agree in the conferring of authority to execute the office of a priest, they are clearly designed to meet the diverse views which exist in the church as to the nature and extent of the presbyter's office.

5. There is a view of this whole subject strangely overlooked, already referred to in part, bearing upon this argument, namely, that *there are many aspects of the same truth; and these various aspects may be very properly provided for by alternative phrases.* Few men receive all the aspects of any single truth. One man sees a truth in one aspect, another man sees it in another aspect. These several aspects are not necessarily op-

posed to each other, nor do they necessarily interpret each other. Why may not the church, by sufficient alternatives, allow these varying aspects of the same truth to be unfolded and asserted, permitting those who hold one view, to utter it, and those who hold another view, to utter that? Apply this to Baptism. Some men see regeneration in Baptism, in an external change of state, wrought by the Holy Spirit externally and officially, as the present Paraclete in the place of the ascended Christ. Others see it in a change of spiritual tendencies or even of character wrought by the Holy Spirit in His sanctifying agency. Others see it, by a combination of these two views, in the new covenant relations and opportunities. Some, again, see more clearly the effects of the dedication of a child to God, and, in connexion with that, the power of faith and of prayer. Others realize more distinctly, and without any close analysis, the simple idea of a church membership, with more or less of privilege. And so on. While *all* agree in *only one* thing, the *only really essential* thing in the whole question, namely, that by Baptism the person baptized is made a member of the church visible. Do these contradict each other? May they not *all* be holding the *whole* truth, while holding, *severally*, only partial and *different* aspects of that whole truth? Is it not right to allow each Christian to utter his own clear view, and not to compel him to utter other views which he does not fully realize? Such compulsion to utter and assent to words and statements, whose sense is not clear, has always been objected to by Churchmen, when in controversy with other systems, and has been urged as a very strong argument against requiring a profession of belief in philosophical isms, as terms of communion. While the church may hold all truth, scriptural and philosophical if she chooses, each

individual should be required to say only that part of all truth which he distinctly apprehends and really believes. This can be accomplished by an alternative phraseology, by which, while the church shall tolerate and present all the aspects of the truth in her whole teaching, she at the same time will allow each person honestly to say that and that only which he receives.

6. Looking at the analogies in our existing Formularies, it appears that an alternative phrase is not necessarily nor generally interpretative; that, when interpretative, such phrases are declared to be so; and that they are generally designed to allow a larger instead of a more limited variety in the definitions of doctrine.

After all, if there were really any danger in the direction here indicated by the objectors, it would be perfectly easy to obviate it by inserting in the Rubric which should authorize the discretionary phraseology, a statement to the effect that, in allowing these alternative forms, it is not intended to interpret the other phrases, nor to propose any change in the doctrine of Baptism as hitherto received in the church. And thus, while individual consciences would be relieved, and the church would allow her members to remain honest in the expression of their personal views, the whole question of the special and peculiar effect of baptism (apart from church membership, *the one and only point* on which all are agreed) is left still in the Prayer Book as in the Scriptures, undecided, as it has been from the beginning, and as it will be so long as the church probationary shall walk "by faith and not by sight."

7. And here, although it be a little on one side of the rubrical argument to which we confine ourselves, yet as suggested by the general course of remark, I must put the question to my brethren: Is the forced retention of

a word, or the absolutely compulsory use of a word, *which has no meaning whatsoever in our Service*, which no one, be he bishop, priest, or layman, can authoritatively explain and define as the fixed and universally accepted meaning of the word in our church, worth all the contention and hard feeling and all the tendency to separation and disruption, which are manifested so extensively in this day?

I ask, very seriously, What is the real, fixed, undisputed meaning of the word "regenerate" in our Baptismal Service? To quote great names, Bishop Hobart gives me one meaning, Dr. Pusey gives me another, very different. Which is right? Shall I add other names? Which two of our bishops, or of our presbyters, or of our learned laymen, will give me exactly the same answer? Does not the practice of this church tolerate each man in his individual answer, however it differs from the answers of other men? The word, then, has no fixed authoritative meaning; if so, then, the word has no meaning, simply kept from old habit, and repeated because—it is in the book. I admit, it is proper to repeat it, because it *is* in the book, even if it has no fixed meaning, or if it has a dozen meanings, as each man interprets it for himself. But, is it right or wise to keep it in the book, incommutable, and as an occasion for penalties, itself meaning nothing? While I may use it in a sense that suits me, and another may use it in a sense that suits him, shall a third man, as good and as valuable as either of us, perhaps better and more valuable than both of us, who is not willing to invent or to apply to it a meaning satisfactory to himself, and who cannot conscientiously assign to it any meaning but what he disapproves, be obliged to use it? If its sense were fixed in the church,

and it involved an essential truth, or were necessary to the Sacrament, the case would be different. As it is, ought he not to be permitted to omit it, or to substitute for it some other appropriate word or expression that has a meaning, and that may suit him? Shall his standing in the church, or even his holy ministry, a gift from the Spirit of God, be endangered for *such* a word? Is not here a strong argument for the alternative phraseology asked for in the Baptismal office?

II. The second objection to an alternative phrase in the Baptismal office is, that *it may frequently involve a conflict between the will of the pastor and that of the parent or person presenting an infant.**

This objection simply admits that there is some difficulty to be met in arranging so important a matter, and there is need of wisdom in preparing the Rubric for the case. But there are difficulties in every duty, and wisdom overcomes difficulties.

1. The same objection might be urged, and doubtless was urged, against some of our present Rubrics, but no practical trouble has ever come from them. For instance, in the Rubric on the Creed, the same difference between the clergyman and the layman might arise. The Rubric directs: "Any churches may omit the words, etc., or may, instead of them, use the words, etc." Some suppose that this requires the dioceses, as being churches, to initiate action, and authorize the "discretion" within their limits. But such has not been the interpretation of usage. Others more correctly, probably, suppose *congregations*, as including minister and people acting by joint consent, to be intended. In either

* A distinguished Doctor of Divinity, President of a Standing Committee and a Deputy to the General Convention, states the objection strongly in these words: "A layman desires baptism for his child, the pastor cannot conscientiously use the Service as it now stands, the layman cannot consent to the use of the alternative phrase. What is to be done in such a case?"

of these interpretations, in both which concurrent action of the clergy and laity is supposed to be required, the decision of the clergy, even theoretically, is always essential, if not conclusive. But, whatever may have been the original purpose, the decision has, practically, been left with the clergy, according to the general analogy of our discretionary forms.

At the time when our Prayer Book was adopted, the controversy, which this Rubric was designed to compose and relieve, was very serious, probably quite as serious as the controversy of the present day in reference to the use of the word "regenerate." The very indefiniteness of the Rubric, as giving increased liberty, was, as far as it went, an advantage. The practical effect of the Rubric was to give to every member of the congregation, whatever was the custom in the desk, a consciousness of liberty, and not unfrequently both forms were quietly used by the people in the same congregation. The writer well remembers one of the best of men, and a most devoted churchman, and a life-long friend of his pastor, who, from the influence of his inherited prejudice, always closed his lips, when this clause in the Creed was read, as it always was read, by the pastor. He was satisfied. He felt that the Rubric, in its spirit and general design, justified him, and he was none the less a churchman for using the liberty which he supposed the Rubric gave him. His individual conscience was at rest, and he was willing that others should enjoy their liberty, as he did his, under this Rubric of peace. And in those days, not many years ago, pastors were wise enough, and kindly enough, not to press points of rubrical conformity, where there might be some doubt admitted, to the extent of driving good men out of the church.

And there are, God be thanked, many such wise and kind pastors now.

In this Rubric on the Creed, we certainly have a case in which the preferences of the pastors and the people would be very likely, even constantly, to come in conflict. In this case the tastes, or preferences, or convictions, of all the individual members of a whole congregation were to be consulted, or at least were involved, whereas, in the proposed Rubric as to the word "regenerate," only the single party presenting the child is concerned. Yet in this more complicated case, no practical difficulty has been ever felt. A rule being settled by the Rubric, and the principle of liberty implied in it being admitted, the church accommodates herself to the rule, and finds somehow the relief which is intended.

2. As another instance, among our present Rubrics, where the objection here referred to may apply, we call attention to the Rubric allowing discretion as to the use of the sign of the cross in Baptism: "If those who present the infant desire the sign of the cross to be omitted, although the church knows no worthy cause of scruple concerning the same, yet in that case the minister may omit that part of the above, &c."

Leaving the argument for a moment, we call special observation to the fact here exhibited, that *our church positively affirms that "scruples" ought to be respected and provided for in the Rubrical system or Ritual of the church*. She thus affirms that conscience is a sacred thing, not to be despised as a qualm of weakness, not to be sneered at as the obstinacy of fools, nor to be stamped upon by the high heel of authority. Even conscience in little things is to be prudently and gently dealt with, not to be snubbed and ridiculed and brought to trial and excommunicated.

“Scruples ” on points of religious doctrine or practice are always presumable to both clergy and laity, and ought to be provided for in any true church system, as was done at the council in Jerusalem, for an example to future ages. With the laity, from their circumstances, “scruples” as to things generally received are not so common, nor are they held with such intense earnestness of conviction as with the clergy. From the general character of the clergy as men of self-sacrifice, from the nature of their profession, and from their engrossedness with theological subjects and divine worship, these “scruples” are more common with them, and more strongly enlist the conscience and sense of duty. And as a wise mother avoids driving her earnest child into antagonism by direct and needless opposition, so a wise mother church will regard with great tenderness such “scruples,” and will provide for them with gentleness and fidelity.

Returning to our argument, we remark, that, before this Rubric as to the use of the sign of the cross was prepared, since the “scruple” alluded to was held, and likely to be held by both clergymen and laymen, it must have been a very grave question to our law makers, how to harmonize the rights of the two orders, as to the *discretion* aimed at, so that both pastor and people should be satisfied. And the result finally reached, if not perfect in itself, yet practically met the necessities of the case, recognizing the abstract principle, that each order has really a right in the matter. For, a *discretion* was allowed, *first* to the layman, who shall “desire the sign of the cross to be omitted,” and *next* to the minister or pastor, who, in such a case, “*may* omit,” (not imperatively “*shall* omit”) the sign. Both minister and layman have a right of judging and acting according to con-

science in the matter, and the judgment and conscience of both must concur to effect the "omission."

If the parties fail to concur, a remedy is at hand, not stated in the words of the Rubric (as perhaps would have been best) but necessitated by the existence of the Rubric, and growing out of it, as we shall presently see. For, the force of the Rubric went much further than its mere words express. It announced a principle that the consciences or preferences—the "*scruples*"—of both the clergy and the laity are to be respected and provided for. And thus it came to pass, that *not only concurrently, but separately*, the discretion was exercised by both pastors and people. If the layman's "scruple" led him to desire the omission, and the pastor's "scruple" led him to refuse the omission, or if, on the other hand, the layman's "scruple" led him to desire the use of the sign, and the pastor's "scruple" led him to desire its omission, the remedy was very simple, and became privileged, as of course,—that the layman could take and present the child to some other clergyman whose "scruple" coincided with his own.

And how soon, under this broad toleration of scruples, the scruple itself passed away? If it had been denied and brow-beaten and unprovided for, it might, in due time, have grown and rent the church, as scruples of even less significance have done under the restraining and persecuting hand of intolerance; and, as the present "scruples" in the church in regard to the word "regenerate" may do, under the pressure of the same iron and unreasoning rule. Shall not such a measure of wisdom, in the very history of our own church, teach its lesson to us?

In looking at this Rubric, we observe that the final and decisive "discretion" is left with the minister.

And this leads us to the principle upon which all discretionary Rubrics must be framed, namely, that the final discretion must be with the clergy. And this proceeds from the fact, that the officiating clergyman, in conducting any service, is not a mere mouth-piece for others, but must have a personal conscience in the words which he uses, and in the service which he performs. This principle must be recognized in the preparation of all Rubrics having reference to discretionary alternative forms. The last and decisive "discretion" must be with the clergyman. The principle above evolved requires this, and the analogy of all such forms in the prayer-book sustains the principle.

We have learned, then, if it be desirable to have a Rubric, which shall authorize an alternative phrase whenever the word "regenerate" occurs in the Baptismal office, how such a Rubric should, so far as this second objection is concerned, be constructed. It will allow to the laity as well as to the clergy, a "discretion," as in other cases is now done. It will make the "discretion" of the clergy final and decisive, as is now done; and if in any case the "scruples" of the pastor and layman do not coincide, it will allow the layman to present his child for baptism to some clergyman with whose usage the layman is satisfied.

From the considerations under this and the previous head, I am satisfied that a Rubric can be made, free from all reasonable exceptions, guarded as to all reasonable misconstructions, accomplishing all reasonable expectations, and bringing a blessing to the church as a Rubric of Peace.

III. The third and last objection, which I propose to consider, comes from a quarter in the church directly opposite to that from which the objections previously

stated, proceed. It is the fear of consequences from the views of church comprehensiveness which we have presented—*the danger of opening the door to ritualistic errors in doctrine by legalizing* in that direction certain liberties in ritual practice.*

1. The substance of our argument is—that the true idea of a perfect church visible, as we in this church should endeavor to realize it, is, that, holding in its standards the scriptural and primitive Faith, and retaining in use the true Sacraments, and having in fact the Apostolic Ministry, it should, in its entire system, be fitted to invite and include all who will assume the Baptismal vows of Repentance or renunciation of sin, of Faith in the cardinal facts of the gospel as contained in the Apostles' Creed, and of Self-consecration to the service of God in dependence upon divine grace. Arranging its system in harmony with these comprehensive terms of communion, it should avoid, as far as possible, mere philosophical formulas and doubtful interpretations of scripture, requiring compliance only in things essential, and leaving large liberty as to matters, both of doctrine and of practice, which are not essential. Upon the basis of these principles, its formularies should be constructed, and its canons of discipline and government should be prepared.

I do sincerely believe, that as a church, and having reference to all its members clerical and lay, the system of our church approaches nearer to this true ideal than any other. But we have not yet recovered it, as it was in the Apostolic days, by any means; for, while our laity are very free, indeed too free, from that ecclesiastical discipline which should always enforce a high and pure morality, yet our clergy, as an order, are too much

* This objection has been set forth very effectively in a series of articles, addressed to me, in "The Episcopalian," of Philadelphia, by a Western Presbyterian.

hampered, by legislative restraints, in the exercise of their ministerial functions. As to the subjects and style of *preaching*, they are as free as men need to be. But as to conducting and arranging for *public worship*, with all its varieties of times and places and occasions and circumstances, they are too much restricted. There should be for them a much more enlarged power, not only of choice between things prescribed, but of absolute discretion—a right of using their own judgment subject to their own sense of loyalty to the church, that they may be able to obey the Apostolic precept: “Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.” Under the present system of restraint, with so little really allowed to their prudence and their convictions of fitness, and the consequent sense of responsibility, and of manly and individual development, it is almost a wonder, that they do not reverse the precept. It is certainly a surprise, that the clergy, as an order, do not demand relief from this perpetual Canonical and Rubrical surveillance as to everything in regard to worship, and insist that they be *trusted*, as men should be, and as other orders and ranks in the church are, as to something.

At all events, we should arrange our system, to allow a more free play for tastes and tendencies, and personal peculiarities of mind and of moral temperament, especially in the directions of the great historic schools in the church, and if there be danger in trusting the clergy with a general and unrestricted discretion, there should be such an increase of Rubrical and discretionary variety, as is demanded by the necessities of the times, and by the real nature and design of the Christian church, in which her ministers, like St. Paul, are to be “made all

things to all men that they may by all means save some."

2. Just here comes in the objection. Granting, that it is right that our system should be enlarged as here suggested, yet, if we depart from present compromises, may not the majorities in our Legislative councils, for the sake of pacificating the extreme Ritualists, go too far, and authorize and provide for the holding of their extreme views to such an extent, that men of the Evangelical school, so called, can not conscientiously fraternize with these extremists in the same Communion? If the doctrinal views of the extreme Ritualists are substantially the same with those of the church of Rome, excepting the acknowledgment of the sole Episcopate of the Bishop of Rome or the Supremacy of the Pope, and, if these views are allowed to be preached in our pulpits, and customs illustrating and impressing these views be allowed to be introduced into our Ritual, will not the Protestant and therefore Catholic character of our church be thus subverted, and men of Evangelical views be therefore compelled to withdraw from its communion when thus subverted?

3. I reply, that a change so radical as is here supposed can not possibly occur in this church, *from the nature of the church itself*. For the identity of this church is in its being Protestant as well as Episcopal. If it *could* cease (an impossibility) to be Protestant, I do not mean in name merely, but in reality, it would cease to be the same church; and those in it true to its identity, however they might be a minority, would be justified in maintaining this identity, and letting the Separatists, however numerous, go. Protestantism in this church, and as this church is related to it, is simply not Romanism; in other words, it is Catholic antiquity and Catholic

Truth in opposition to Roman novelty and Roman error. *Ages ago*, before the Roman error was developed, Catholic truth could exist without being Protestant. But *now* a church to be Catholic must be Protestant. It is Protestant because it is Catholic. It can not be Catholic unless it is Protestant. However far our legislators may go in providing for all that variety of doctrine or of ritual which is consistent with Catholic diversity (as, for example, views on the Lord's Supper, ranging from that of a simple memorial to the Lutheran view of consubstantiation, or ranging through the various views and expressions of the Ancient Fathers, or of the English and Continental Reformers of the last three centuries), they cannot ever affirm nor admit the dogmas of the church of Rome. For, a change of the majority to Roman error, if submitted to, would destroy the identity of this church, and, therefore, such a change, if possible, would leave the effectual remedy, as we have stated it, in the hands of the unsubmissive minority.

4. But, I reply, secondly, that so extreme a change of doctrine and ritual, as is here deprecated, is really not possible in this church, *because the heart of this church, of its clergy and of its laity, is soundly Protestant*. The clergymen and laymen who really love Rome, are comparatively few. The different houses in the General Convention represent the whole church, and their powers are admirably balanced. Read the last pastoral letter of the House of Bishops, carefully prepared, and adopted with unanimity; and you see that Romanism can never become the law. Look over the men who make up the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies, and you see, that however conservative and timid in some things, or however partizan and imperious in other things, they can not be other than

Protestant. Read the church papers, weeklies and quarterlies, and you see the change of tone, the growing readiness to recognize the dangers, the increasing disposition to consider propositions of compromise, the outspoken readiness to make some concessions to conscientious scruples, the very manifest tendency to consider and discuss questions, which a year or two ago were regarded as almost sealed against any examination. The great majority in the church have Christian principles, and some brotherly affections. Our people have been generally and gradually educated, although the idea has not always taken definite shape, into the idea of comprehension. Division is dreaded. Separation is not to be thought of. We have so much of liberty, it will not be hard to give more. I speak my own convictions—that the next General Convention will utter its thunder of rebuke against the despicable spirit of persecution, and that the rights of those who differ in the church will be, if not fully, yet further than ever before, guaranteed and provided for, in a more liberal and fraternal legislation. We shall see.

